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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 86
46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2004
INTRODUCED BY
Terry T. Marquardt

A JOINT MEMORIAL
EXPRESSING THE CONDOLENCE OF THE LEGISLATURE UPON THE DEATH OF
FORMER REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE E. FETTINGER.

WHEREAS, the legislature was saddened to hear of the death
of former Representative George E. Fettinger on July 3, 2003;
and

WHEREAS, former Representative Fettinger was born February
27, 1929 in Rochester, New York, and moved to New Mexico in
1953 when he was stationed at Kirtland air force base; and

WHEREAS, as he said in a 1968 interview, as he was
considering a run for the governorship of New Mexico, "The area
just appealed to me after the first shock. I landed at the
sunport during a sandstorm "; and

WHEREAS, George graduated with honors from the university
of New Mexico law school in 1958 and moved to Alamogordo to

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1 practice law, which he did for almost four decades; and

2 WHEREAS, George was elected to the house of
3 representatives in 1964, where he served for almost twenty
4 years; and

5 WHEREAS, George's legislative career spanned a time that
6 included some of the most interesting politics and vital issues
7 of the last half of the twentieth century in New Mexico, and a
8 lot of his legislative work still stands today; and

9 WHEREAS, in 1970, Representative Fettinger ran for speaker
10 of the house but lost on the second vote to Representative
11 Walter Martinez, leader of the "Mama Lucy's"; and

12 WHEREAS, George was part of the "Cowboy Coalition" that
13 elected Representative Gene Samberson in 1979 and was chairman
14 of the house judiciary committee during and after the infamous
15 penitentiary riot of 1980; and

16 WHEREAS, George became New Mexico's most knowledgeable and
17 influential legislator on corrections issues, working
18 tirelessly to ensure that the legislature provided the
19 resources necessary to improve the corrections system, from
20 increased funding to needed statutory changes; and

21 WHEREAS, George was also interested in improving the
22 state's education system and was instrumental in establishing
23 the state's system of community colleges; and

24 WHEREAS, Alamogordo had the supreme good fortune to be
25 represented by two of the most powerful men in the legislature,

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1 Representative George E. Fettinger and Senator Aubrey Dunn; and

2 WHEREAS, when people around the roundhouse reminisce about
3 the legislature in the sixties and seventies, they remember
4 George Fettinger's amazing intellect, his sense of ethics and,
5 like his senate colleague, his stamina in outlasting his
6 opponents in committee; and

7 WHEREAS, when he considered a run for the governorship in
8 1968, George articulated concerns that sound remarkably
9 familiar today, including wanting to use the prestige of the
10 governor's office to attract industry to New Mexico; wanting to
11 focus on bringing into the state more light, technical industry
12 and electronics industries that would not require large amounts
13 of water; wanting to overhaul the educational system; and
14 wanting to press for a federal land-claims court to settle land
15 title disputes in northern New Mexico; and

16 WHEREAS, George's career as an attorney was also
17 noteworthy because he argued two landmark cases before the
18 United States supreme court, the most famous being *Mescalero v.*
19 *Jones*, one of the seminal cases dealing with state taxation of
20 Indian property; and

21 WHEREAS, George Fettinger was an active member of the
22 state and national bar associations, was active in community
23 affairs and was fittingly named Alamogordo's citizen of the
24 year in 1993;

25 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE

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1 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that sincere condolences be extended to the
2 family of Representative George E. Fettinger; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
4 transmitted to his wife, Nell Fettinger, and family.

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